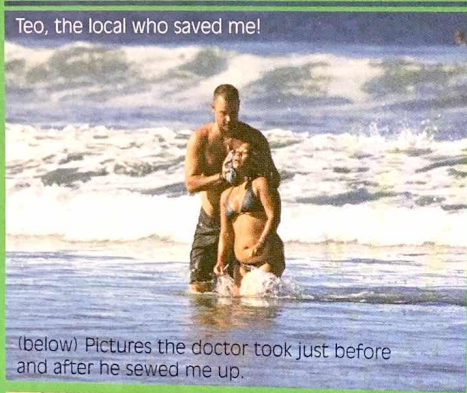




Sonia and Robin, on a layover on the way home

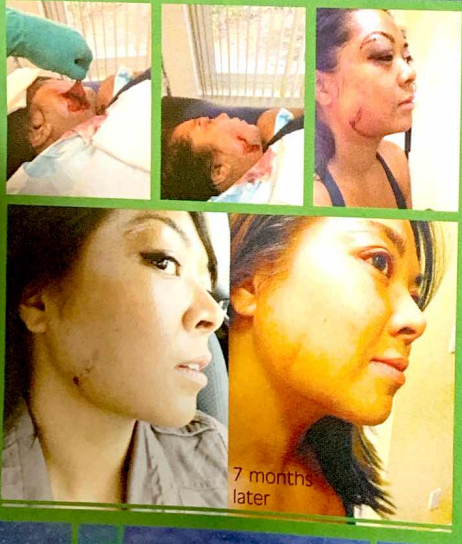


Robin and Sonia ... beach walk



Teo, the local who saved me!

(below) Pictures the doctor took just before and after he sewed me up.



7 months later

A Costa Rican Souvenir

By Robin Pacquing-Medeiros
Photos by www.surfingnosara.com

Instincts told me the trip would change my life...

My best surf buddy, Sonia, and I eagerly waited for months, so when we boarded the plane destined for Costa Rica, we knew we'd have the time of our lives.

Nine incredible days passed. Skies were bright, and the surf was pumping as we enjoyed the company of new friends in and out of the lineup.

Our last morning in Nosara began like every other – woke up, black coffee, waxed the board, then walked to the beach, cheerily wishing everyone a "Buenos dias!" along the way. I strangely felt a dread that warned me to anticipate something.

It happened about forty-five minutes into my session. I pearly, wiped out hard, and then felt a sharp and intense blow. In the darkness of the Pacific I thought, "that's totally gonna bruise". I swam to the surface and touched the deep gash on the right side of my face knowing it was far worse than any bruise.

The set rolled in as I held my face together. It was all adrenaline at this point, so I retrieved my board, paddled with one arm towards the shore hoping to catch the white water in. A few yards from the beach, a local noticed my state and sprinted towards me. He took off his rash guard and immediately applied pressure to my face. If he hadn't spotted me at that critical point, who knows how that day

could have unfolded.

I remember telling him my friends were still out there and I needed to find them. His calm tone (he spoke English!) told me that he would come back and look for them once I was with the doctor. The next thing I knew I was on the back of a motorbike, in shock and barefoot as the bike cruised along the dusty road to the clinic.

To my luck (again!), the young, friendly doctor also spoke English. Right after an injection of morphine, Sonia came running into the room. My heart burst when I saw her. We shared a few moments and tearful words of support before the operation, but I infinitely felt comforted with her soul being close by.

After thirty-six hours, a long drive while suffering morphine crash, bush fires in the horizon, one broken down taxi, one layover, countless looks of concern, and twenty-six stitches later, Sonia and I arrived back in Canada. My dear husband greeted me at the terminal with flowers and my heart burst again.

It was probably the fin that lacerated my face. It was beyond flattering when friends compared my accident to Keala Kennelly's Teahupoo wipeout in 2011. I can only dream to rip like her.

Professional or just your every day surf betty, this kind of thing can happen to anyone.

I've learned that surfing is nothing unless you use it to learn about yourself and meet kind souls along the way.

The crazy thing? The scar resembles a wave. ✦

